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ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS
of the
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE AND STAFF
of the
PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD

20 December 1951

Excerpts from a Briefing for the Members of
the Board by the Director at a Meeting Held
November 26, 1951, in the Conference Room
of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Our military and economic expenditures are sound and necessary. They are indispensable arms of United States policy for peace. They are, however, expensive and limited arms. There is available to us another great weapon in the form of psychological strategy. The United States Government must make the most productive use of this weapon, through the fully planned and thoroughly coordinated actions which it may wish to take.

If one examines the policy papers of the United States Government which concern themselves with the posture and programs of the country in the present crisis, one will note that, as a result of a gradual evolution, an integrated psychological strategy has in the last year or two become a matter of major concern to our government. We have realized that this a powerful weapon of pressure and persuasion which can be used now for peace.

It was in recognition of this fact that the President by directive, on April 4, 1951, created the Psychological Strategy Board with broad authority and responsibilities. The Board exists to provide for the more effective planning, coordination and conduct of psychological operations within the framework of approved national policies. To this end, the Board is given

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Charles W. McCarthy, Colonel, USA,
Executive Officer
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the responsibility for the formulation and promulgation of over-all national psychological objectives, policies and programs, and for the coordination and evaluation of the national psychological effort.

This Board was established to perform a function for which there was previously no adequate machinery in the government. As you know, the Board is composed of the Under Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and the Director of Central Intelligence, and has as its principal military adviser a representative from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who sits with the Board in its meetings. The directive (as interpreted by Board decision) provides that other temporary members may be added from time to time representing agencies whose interest might be effected by a Board decision. The Director is appointed by the President and is charged with supervision of staff activities in support of the Board.

We have organized a staff around the three principal functions given to the Board by the presidential directive. These are: (1) the formulation and promulgation of over-all national psychological objectives, policies and programs; (2) the coordination of the national psychological effort; and (3) the evaluation of the national psychological effort.

(Attached are brief statements of functions of the three offices prepared by the Assistant Directors.)

There is, of course, a group concerned with housekeeping problems of the Board and staff.

Please permit me to emphasize certain points that should always be borne in mind. In the first place, the Psychological Strategy Board is anchored at the highest level in government. It must remain there. Second, the directive wisely provides that the Board not engage in operations. Third, by government standards, it is, and should remain, a small staff group if it is to continue to concern itself with the broadest strategic considerations as intended by the directive.

(At the present time there are approximately 52 people on the Board staff, including professional, administrative, clerical and support personnel, such as messengers, etc. It is believed that in this fiscal year the staff will not exceed a total of about 73 persons.)

Fourth, although the Director is appointed by the President, he has no powers except as they derive from the Board itself, in which are reposed all authority and powers. Fifth, I believe that the Director's function is to furnish adequate staff support to the Board, as well as to carry out decisions of the Board. I do not believe that the members of the Board can individually and collectively discharge their mission without central staff assistance. Finally, the Board makes the decisions as to the substantive problems with which the staff shall be formally concerned.

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I think it is essential that we develop a common and clear view of what constitutes psychological strategy. It is my conviction that virtually no major decision or action of the government in the foreign field is without the deepest psychological considerations. I believe that no major decision or action of government in this field can be taken without some effect on the direction and course of the cold war. Thus, it is imperative that in the United States Government there be a full understanding that the kind of times we live in do not permit neglect in this vital respect.

The Board, through its members, must be constantly alert to the fact that policy made, plans adopted or action taken, if designed to influence the minds and conduct of foreign peoples or governments, must be a part of and conform to over-all psychological strategy. The Director may make his contributions, supported by staff, through appropriate relationships with the N.S.C. and its Senior Staff, as well as with the Departments.

This does not mean that the Board will undertake to make political, military or economic decisions on its own initiative, and without reference to the responsible departments concerned. It does mean that the members, both individually and collectively, must make certain that not only are the psychological implications of major action taken into account in the decision-making process; they must also make certain that actions in general conform to the strategic concept, in order that our over-all objectives, policies and programs are thoroughly integrated. And they must make certain that the most telling psychological effect is derived from such coordinated action.

The Board is charged with the development of a strategic concept, as complete and global as circumstances will permit. This concept must, of course, be within the framework of approved national policy. From it should flow the over-all national psychological objectives, policies and programs. And from it should flow major regional or functional plans.

Assuming the development of major plans and programs, this Board is concerned with matters much broader than those normally encompassed in the definition of psychological warfare. We are indeed concerned with overt propaganda. We are also by directive concerned with the varied activities covered by NSC directives referred to in the Presidential Directive establishing the Board. But we must also be sure that any psychological effort is a total effort -- that we use all of the weapons in the arsenal in order to attain a given objective.

The Board is the nerve center for strategic psychological operations and provides a focal point for assuring the planned use by all governmental units of activities to influence the opinions, attitudes, emotions and behavior of foreign groups in ways that will support the achievement of our approved national aims.

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To be more specific, let me suggest three major areas of interest and responsibility of the PSB.

Assume, first, that a national decision were made involving major psychological strategy. Forget for a moment the processes by which the decision has been reached. The action to be taken under the decision might involve geographical or functional considerations.

For example, suppose that the national decision were made to chip X country off the Soviet block. The Board must be concerned with the coordinated roles of USIE and CIA. In addition, however, in order to make certain that we harness all the resources at the government's command in such an effort, we should examine the possible role of other agencies. What fiscal pressures should be brought to bear and, therefore, how can the Treasury participate? What is the role of Commerce, or Labor? Does the Export-Import Bank have the opportunity to make a contribution? Would a show of force by the fleet in nearby waters contribute materially to the program? All of these things must be considered. I know of no other place in government with the mission or interest or authority that can do this.

An example of so-called functional action would be a proposal for the regulation of armaments. In such a case, the Board would be concerned with the method and timing of the proposal, as well as the questions of advance or subsequent buildup and exploitation, all in relation to other activities and interests of the government in connection with psychological strategy.

A second area of interest for the Board would be the decision-making process itself. The Board, through its members and with the assistance of the Director and the staff, must make certain that psychological considerations of major decisions receive attention before and during the decision-making process and not that an assessment of psychological impact be made solely after the event. Thus, the Board should have influence on major decisions made.

A third area of Board interest would be the development or the stimulation of the development of a strategic concept for purposes of psychological strategy.

I have stated these areas of interest in inverse order, because we have not as a nation been permitted the convenience of preparing for a D-Day to take place in the future. Ideally, there would be first, the development of the strategic concept; decisions made in conformity; and finally, planning and major actions in consonance with the over-all strategy and decisions. However, we as a government are today faced with the necessity of action and

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the requirement for decision. D-Day is a thing of the past. Thus, development of strategy, decision-making, planning and action must all proceed simultaneously.

It seems clear that the PSB and the Director and staff have a constant and continuing role to play in these areas.

The Board as such does not make national policy, although it may be called upon to assist in that regard. It must be remembered that the Board has in its membership Under or Deputy Secretaries from the Departments responsible for political and military policy. Therefore, departmental views are fully represented in the Board. Within the framework of national policy, the interests of the Board are in general as broad as the interests of government itself.

The Board is, I know, dedicated to the cause of winning the cold war. I can assure you that the Director and his staff are also so dedicated. You, the members of the Board, have, I believe, in your hands one of the greatest single instruments to assure peace in the world.

If we do not do our work well, the Psychological Strategy Board as such will not survive; but I am as certain as I can be that the notion of over-all integrated strategy will persist in government and that somehow and in some way this job will be done. I ask your support in making it possible for this Board to do it.

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II. OFFICE OF PLANS AND POLICY

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The Office of Plans and Policy is responsible to the Director for the formulation and recommendation of over-all national psychological objectives, policies and programs. The functions of the office are grouped in two categories: identification of policies and objectives; and planning. Characteristically, the office makes its contribution in several ways -- by providing comments for consideration in the development of NSC papers, by recommending priorities for PSB and POC planning tasks, by developing psychological strategy concepts, plans and programs, and by advising the Director on all policy and planning matters.

Much of the office's work is done through panels which bring together experts in a given field from other government agencies. In all its activities, the office tries to make the fullest use of the experience available in such agencies.

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III, OFFICE OF COORDINATION

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The Office of Coordination has four main missions, each of which is related to a greater or lesser extent to its general function of insuring that operational planning, conducted by the departments and agencies in support of the national psychological effort, is coordinated and effective. The first mission is concerned with the following up of operational planning under PSB plans in order to make sure that these operational plans develop everything inherent in the PSB plan, that the parts thereof are consistent, that there are no gaps, and that every agency, public or private, which has a part to play in carrying out the plan is in the act at the right time. Next, there will be situations in which existing basic policy is presumably adequate but where many agencies are involved and where, as a result, there may be a failure through lack of coordination fully to carry out basic policy. In this situation, the Office takes steps to make governmental action under existing policies as effective as possible. The third mission is to be knowledgeable concerning private or voluntary agencies and their individual abilities to play a part in the cold war. The purpose of this is to make sure that these agencies are called upon for such assistance as they can provide at the appropriate time. Finally, the last general mission of this Office is to keep under review the governmental machinery which exists for interdepartmental coordination in our area; this with the object of insuring that it is at all times adequate against the demands made upon it, to see to it that interdepartmental mechanisms are created as the need requires, that existing organisms are adjusted as necessary, and that old ones are abolished when they are no longer needed.

These functions are carried out through a small staff which will consist of individuals with combined functional and agency experience. As a general principle of operation, the staff will always attempt to achieve coordination through existing mechanisms.

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IV. OFFICE OF EVALUATION AND REVIEW

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The Office of Evaluation and Review begins to make its contribution to the Staff and the Board at the very start of each project. It is the task of this Office to provide an estimate of the situation or problem as the basis for planning. Working through the existing agencies, it obtains the intelligence support which the Staff requires, and, where necessary, initiates outside research for special information, taking particular care to ask the right questions so as to eliminate all possible wastage of time and effort. The other major aspect of the work of this Section is the evaluation of the effectiveness of our psychological operations. This is largely pioneer work. Some mechanisms exist for the evaluation of our overt information programs; but to find out whether all our psychological weapons are hitting the target is a complex task. Its solution will require not merely the use of such research techniques as public opinion polls, target surveys, and studies of content analyses, but will demand original creative research, for which the Office of Evaluation and Review calls upon the services of outside experts who have specialized in this field, as well as upon the assistance of existing Government agencies or departments.

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